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ABSTRACT

A case study of a contract college, John Wood Community College, is presented. The history of the community college movement in Illinois is traced, and the nature of state governance is examined. The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is the body charged with the overall regulation, supervision, and planning for the community college system. Both the ICCB and the Illinois Board of Higher Education have encouraged the sharing of resources to avoid duplication of efforts and have endorsed the common market concept of delivering educational services through contractual arrangements with other agencies. John Wood Community College serves five counties using existing college and proprietary schools in Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa to provide instructional and support services for its students. Counselors of the community college maintain contact with students throughout their educational programs, and the full range of student services are provided, including counseling, financial aid, student government, student activities, and placement. Funding support for John Wood comes from four sources: tuition and fees, state aid, local tax levy, and federal monies. Not every course is offered through the common market system. John Wood has its own open learning center, a nontraditional delivery system allowing students to take developmental studies and college-level courses on a self-paced mastery basis. An outreach project also provides courses whenever and wherever they are needed within the district. Among the advantages of the common market approach are that it maximizes the utilization of facilities and discourages tax-supported building projects, and it enhances program flexibility for students. Challenges or possible problem areas are also identified. (SW)

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THE "CONTRACT COLLEGE" TYPE:
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"Case Study #2: The 'Contract College' Type:
John Wood Community College

by

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Introduction

John Wood Community College was organized as Illinois Community College District Number 539 following the election of the Board of Trustees in November, 1974. The College received a formal certificate of recognition from the State of Illinois Community College Board in July of 1975 with renewal granted in July, 1976. The certificate is an indication that the College has met all of the state requirements and thereby qualifies for state apportionment claims, state grants, and financial aid.

The College is governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees who are elected at large from the District. The President is the Chief Administrative Officer and reports to the Board of Trustees. John Wood Community College is the newest Community College in Illinois and the only college in the state, or nation, to operate almost exclusively through contractual relationships with private and proprietary schools.

History of Illinois Community Colleges

The Community College movement began in the state of Illinois. After the initiation of a post-high school program in Joliet in

1902, a number of school districts followed Joliet's example, and thus, in effect, began a junior college program without specific legal sanction. In 1931, the first legislation enabled Chicago to operate a junior college program as part of its school system. Legislation validating existing downstate junior colleges and permitting the establishment of new ones came in 1937. In its 1951 session, the state legislature recognized the junior colleges as part of the public common school system, administered by local boards of education, subject to supervision by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In 1965, the 72nd General Assembly passed the Illinois Public Community College Act, which enabled junior colleges and two-year colleges existing at the time to become part of the state higher education system and removed such colleges from the category of "common schools."

There were three different classes of junior colleges possible under the 1965 law: Class I -- state system junior colleges; Class II -- junior colleges which had separate tax rates, and individual boards, but which did not qualify or wish to join the state system; and grades 13 and 14 of common school district, a carryover from the old law to provide for colleges which did not have a tax rate separate from the common school. From the beginning, the Act envisioned the development through either local initiative or conversion of Class II Districts to a system of Class I junior colleges blanketing the state. To achieve the goal, financial incentives, in the form of seed money, increased state

aid per semester hour or equivalent, and building funds up to 75 percent of the total cost of captial projects, were made available only to Class I districts, a practice that continues today, with variations in the funding formula.

The response was overwhelming. Within two and a half years from the passage of the Act, there were over 30 Class I junior college districts accepted or approved covering approximately 75 percent of the population of Illinois in 1967. Today, the state systems of Class I community colleges have expanded to a network of comprehensive community colleges on 49 campuses in 30 locally governed districts and one experimental district governed by the State Board itself, serving approximately 10.3 million population of the state. At the start of fall semester, 1976, student headcount enrollment amounted to over 325,000 with an FTE of over 154,000. The total community college headcount enrollment constituted nearly half of the total student enrollment in all of higher education in the state.

State Governance

The Illinois Community College Board is the body charged with the overall regulation, supervision, and planning for the community college system. It is composed of ten members. Eight of them are appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate. The ninth is a non-voting student member selected by the recognized committee of students of the ICCB. Finally, the State Superintendent of Education serves as an ex-officio voting member. The eight regular members serve for terms of six years. The non-voting

student member serves a one-year term.

Members of the ICCB must be state residents and citizens, selected as far as practicable on the basis of their knowledge of, or interest and experience in, problems of community colleges. However, the statute prohibits a member of the ICCB from being engaged in public employment for which he receives regular salary from public funds, or from being actively engaged in education as a profession or hold current membership on a school board of trustees of a public or non-public college, university or technical institute. Thus, a trustee, teacher, or administrator of a community college would have to resign that position upon assuming a position on the ICCB.

The ICCB members serve without compensation. They are, however, compensated for expenses actually incurred, and have the power to employ and fix the compensation of an executive officer and such employees as it deems necessary for the purposes of carrying out their legal function. The powers and duties of the ICCB include:

(a) Statewide planning and coordination for the community colleges;

(b) Feasibility surveys for new community colleges;

(c) Cooperation with the individual institutions in continuing studies of educational policy;

(d) Entering into intergovernmental contracts and to accept federal funds;

(e) Determining proper construction standards for community colleges;

(f) Determining standards for establishment of community colleges and site location; and

(g) Evaluation of new units of instruction, research or public service.

Additionally, the ICCB has the duty of establishing the various operational, administrative, and scholastic standards which the individual community colleges must meet, and to grant recognition to those institutions meeting such standards. Recognition by the ICCB is necessary in order for a community college district to qualify for state apportionment funding.

The ICCB has from the beginning treated John Wood Community College the same as every other community college in the state. The College is required to complete various planning documents and submit all reports under the state management information system. No modifications have been requested by either party and all deadlines have been met as to various state reports.

In addition to state recognition and state guidelines, the federal government has approved John Wood Community College for all federal programs. Students of John Wood are now eligible to receive Veterans Benefits, BEOG's, SEOG's, and also qualify for the workstudy programs. Prior to approval, the Office of Education sent a two man inspection committee to Quincy, Illinois, to evaluate the college operation. The report submitted to a review committee in Washington gave solid support to the concept and to the college operation.

College officials were also requested to give testimony to Representative O'Hara's Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education. The testimony was published in the Congressional Record entitled, Higher Education Act Amendments of 1976.

The ICCB is also empowered to promulgate, effectuate, and

administer rules and regulations. Accordingly, the ICCB has published its Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, referred to as the "ICCB Manual." The policies section outlines the ICCB's general requirements for recognition, administration, instructional offerings, public service programs, learning resources, student services, finances, sites construction, and institutional studies. The procedures section describes the requirements necessary to implement the Board's policies.

In 1972, legislation was enacted which directed the ICCB to establish or otherwise provide for new districts or for the annexation to adjacent community college districts. Recent legislation has further encouraged, if not forced, all non-community college district territory to annex to established districts, by prohibiting public schools from levying taxes to support the "charge-back program." In effect the state is forcing all territory to be a part of the public community college system.

The Common Market Concept

The common market concept is a method of delivering educational services through contractual arrangements with other agencies in and near the community college district. There is nothing in the state statute to prohibit the contractual method of operation. Both the Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Board of Higher Education have encouraged the sharing of resources to avoid duplication of efforts. In fact, Master Plan III conceived the idea of the common market and encouraged its development. No modification of state legislation was needed to form District 539 as a common

market institution. The operation of the college is identical to all other community colleges in the state with the only difference being that instructional services are purchased, or contracted from private postsecondary institutions.

The College Operation

John Wood Community College, with administrative offices and non-traditional classrooms located in Quincy, Illinois, serves five counties with a population base of nearly 100,000 persons. The design of the contractual common market concept has a philosophical base of utilization of all educational resources in the area to provide comprehensive community college education opportunities to district residents. Thus, John Wood uses existing college and proprietary schools in Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa to provide instructional and support services for its students.

Currently, six schools are cooperating in the venture with JWCC. Culver-Stockton College, Canton, Missouri, and Quincy College, Quincy, Illinois, are four-year liberal arts colleges, while Hannibal-LaGrange College, Hannibal, Missouri, is a private two-year liberal arts college. Southeastern Community College is a public community college in Iowa which is in a position to serve JWCC residents living in the northwest section of the district. Gem City Business College, Quincy, Illinois, offers career programs in Business, Horology, and Fashion Merchandising; while Quincy Technical Schools, Quincy, Illinois, offers technical training in five fields of study; both are proprietary schools. In addition to the extensive two-year transfer offerings available through the liberal

arts setting, career programs are offered in thirteen fields; Accounting, Agri-Business Management, Air Conditioning, Auto Body Repair, Auto Mechanics, Data Processing, Drafting and Design, Fashion Merchandising, Horology, Law Enforcement, Practical Nursing, Secretarial Science, and Welding. A variety of community service courses and seminars have also been held.

Students apply and are admitted to John Wood Community College with each student consulting with a JWCC counselor or advisor to plan an educational program. As a part of the counseling/advising session, the student's financial needs are assessed, with JWCC providing a full range of opportunities, encouraging students to apply for appropriate aid programs.

From among the courses offered at the common market institutions, and incidentally there are nearly 700 unique sections available each semester, the student selects the courses which will most readily lead him toward his educational objectives. The student registers for his classes, after proper advising sessions, with a copy of his registration going to the registrar of each school where he is taking classes. When classes begin, the student's name appears on a class list with "native" students of the contractual common market institution(s). The instructor has no way of knowing who is and who is not a JWCC student. At the end of the semester, grades are turned in by instructors to the appropriate registrars who forward the grades of JWCC students to the registrar at JWCC where they are recorded on the permanent transcript. The process is not really that simple for the college registrars involved, but is quite simple for the student.

JWCC counselors and other staff members maintain contact with students throughout their educational programs, and the full range of student services are provided including counseling, financial aid, student government, student activities, (including athletics) and placement.

The JWCC student pays $12 per semester hour of credit as an in-district resident. The common market colleges are paid on the basis of credit hour production, with a decreasing variable rate established which recognizes cost effectiveness of large numbers of students. The variable rate concept was introduced during negotiation sessions with different rates established at each institution, reflecting enrollment patterns and other expense factors for individual campuses. At Quincy College, the current rate is $50 per credit hour for the first 6,000 hours; $40 for the next 4,000 hours; $30 for the next 2,000 hours; and $20 for the next 2,000 hours. There has been some discussion to increase the rate if projected enrollments are surpassed, recognizing that increased costs may be associated with heavier than expected enrollments. Negotiated rates for instructional services differ at each institution, reflecting the uniqueness of each campus in relation to program costs. In one instance, the variable rate was discarded because laboratory stations restricted, or limited, the economy of increased enrollment.

In addition to the low tuition rate the student may purchase a student activity ticket for any of the five schools at the same price as "native" students. Each JWCC student is also entitled to use the libraries of all five schools, with a composite library of

over 300,000 volumes.

Funding support for John Wood comes from four sources — tuition and fees, state aid, local tax levy and federal monies. An initial budget of approximately $900,000 provided support for a student enrollment of over 800 including a JWCC staff of six administrators, several part-time professionals, four CETA paraprofessionals, six secretaries, and student workers. The FY77 budget was expanded to $1.6 million to accommodate over 1500 students in the second year of operation. A modest increase in personnel for FY77 has permitted improved services to the students.

The JWCC Board of Trustees was elected in the fall of 1974. Administrative and support staff were hired during the winter and spring with contract agreements reached with the common market schools in the summer of 1975 and classes beginning in August, 1975. Enrollment projections by the State of Illinois and knowledgeable consultants who worked on the College's feasibility study estimated 400 students for the 1975-76 school year and 1000 students by 1980. During the first summer, applications seemed to lag, and it looked as if enrollment would not reach the projection; but the concept caught on, and 670 students enrolled for the 1975 fall classes. By March, over 800 were enrolled, and projections called for 1200 students for the 1976 school year. By the end of the 1976 fall registration it was obvious that projections were light again as the headcount enrollment exceeded 1500 students. The 1977 spring enrollment figures will no doubt approach 2000 students.

From the very beginning JWCC sought recognition from the

North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. In March, 1976, the college received Candidate for Acceditation status with North Central, and a report submitted by the visiting evaluation team was very positive.

The quality of the programs and the soundness of the concept have been scrutinized and supported by several state agencies. All programs offered by John Wood must be approved by the local Trustees, the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE). The ICCB staff also must approve each course description submitted by JWCC.

Not every course is offered through the common market system. JWCC has its own Open Learning Center, a non-traditional delivery system whereby students can take a variety of developmental as well as college level courses on a self-paced mastery level basis. The College recently assumed sponsorship of a Licensed Practical Nursing program which had been previously handled by the Quincy Public Schools.

In addition, JWCC has embarked on an ambitious program, termed Project Outreach, designed to provide courses whenever and wherever they are needed in the JWCC district. Over 200 evening courses have been offered in seven communities spread throughout the district, which encompasses 1,821 square miles, so that residents are within 20 minutes of JWCC course offerings. While many instructors from the common market schools are engaged to teach these courses they are employed directly by JWCC as part-time adjuct faculty. Many courses have been designed for industrial and special interest groups including:

--A Spanish course for employees of the Harris Corporation which does considerable international sales to Spanish-speaking countries; employees take the course, taught by a Quincy College instructor, during their lunch hour three days a week.

--Seminars for food preparation service workers to prepare them for an examination recently required by the State of Illinois.

--An interdisciplinary humanities course in cooperation with area high schools and the Qunicy Society of Fine Arts; students listen to the artists explain their specialties, then attend concerts, art shows, etc., where the same artists perform.

--A securities seminar designed to assist businessmen in their efforts to combat "shoplifters."

--A special phramacology course for Licensed Practical Nurses; the course was designed by are hosptial personnel to up-grade LPN skills.

--Courses offered in conjunction with the American Institute of Banking.

--A unique summer gardening program which included shared garden plots.

--Sponsorship of the Retired Senior Volunteer Program.

--A public water treatment seminar for public water supply personnel to update their skills; this has been expanded into several 3-hour courses in water treatment.

For years educators have talked about cooperative efforts with little tangible results. Institutional paternalism and state restrictions have discouraged the efforts of those who proposed

cooperative ventures. The common market may prove to be the vehicle to merge occupational and transfer programs, encouraging vocational education to become more liberal, while vocationalizing the concept of the liberal arts.

Advantages of the Common Market

First of all, the concept immediately permits a new community college to offer quality programs on a large scale. Taking advantage of the physical as well as human resources of established educational programs permits "the new college kid on the block" to be accepted almost immediately. The public is very cost-conscious and therefore accepts and encourages cooperative efforts that maximize the utilization of facilities and discourages tax supported building projects.

Secondly, not having to expand time and energies on building programs, the Board and Staff can concentrate on identifying community needs with appropriate programs to meet those needs. Program planning includes a heavy emphasis on non-traditional education offerings, since most of the traditional education has been purchased. An Open Learning Center, media supported instruction, home study courses, high school escrow programs, public library programs and experiential learning activities have already been implemented or are in the planning stages.

Thirdly, student program flexibility is enhanced as the student can "tailor make" a program through several institutions or off-campus programs. The common market concept has been designed to bring educational services closer to the people, shortening the

traveling distances and recognizing the time parameters of the predominately rural, agriculturally-based clientele. This approach is apparently working as evidenced by the fact that over fifty percent of the students exceed the age of twenty-six.

A fourth advantage to the common market concept is that the expanded programs and services encourage young students to stay in the area. Why leave the district to attend a private or public residential college when the opportunity is available locally, at reduced tuition rates? Over a period of time the new concept may change the outward migration pattern of the typical rural community.

There are many other distinct advantages to the contractual common market, but time and space prevent a full disclosure. Ultimately, however, the success or failure will hinge on two factors: quality of programs and cost per unit of instruction. Quality will be judged over a period of time and measured by the success of the graduates. Cost factors, however, are more readily discernible. Preliminary unit cost figures have encouraged the JWCC Board and Staff to be cautiously optimistic. Second year enrollment increases should decrease the per unit cost because of the variable bulk rate payment schedule to common market schools. Direct instructional costs are easily identified. Not so easy is the task of measuring savings on buildings that have not been built, equipment that is being shared, and man hours that are saved in purchasing ready made programs.

Challenges for the Common Market Concept

There are potential problem areas with this fresh approach to delivering educational services. Among these are:

Can the common market colleges respond quickly to the changing patterns of student enrolmment and increasing demands of programs and facilities?

Will the expanded community college enrollment have a negative impact on the philosophical base of the institutional identity, and, if so, will the dual involvement create a conflict which affects the instructional programs?

Will the mechanics of admission, registration, drop and adds, withdrawals, program changes and audit trails, restrict and discourage cooperation among institutions?

Can a public institution avoid the criticism and potential judicial review dealing with the separation of church and state in working with church related colleges?

Will the State of Illinois recognize the uniqueness of the common market concept and be flexible enough to respond with differing funding patterns to offset built-in contractual costs for capital expenditures and equipment?

Will the Board of Trustees and professional staff be able to resist the desire to build a monument, or develop an athletic program?

Will various accrediting agencies continue to approve the concept and accept the evaluation techniques that are under consideration?

These and other challenges face the Board and Staff of JWCC. Hopefully, the challenges will be accepted and solutions will be found to permit the residents of District 539 the opportunity to complete educational objectives in a most unusual fashion.